

Robin Burke
821 Millbrook Road
Middletown, CT 06457
HB 5537

March 13, 2014

Dear CT PHC Testimony,

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee:

I write to ask you to strongly support and vote in the affirmative to add bill language for the modernization of the CT Naturopathic physician scope of practice to HB 5537. The language needs to be attached to this bill so it can come before the Public Health Committee for consideration. This Naturopathic scope of practice law is 90 years old and has not kept pace with the significant advances in education and training of Naturopathic doctors in the ensuing decades.

I have been a patient of naturopathic physicians since 1985. At that time, I was 20 and had just been diagnosed with Type I diabetes at Yale New Haven. Despite what Yale had to offer, I continued to be extremely ill. I was so sick I was having difficulty working. No MDs were able to shed light on why I was so sick. I was doing everything I had been taught to manage diabetes, but I became more and more debilitated.

A friend stepped in and took me to see a naturopathic doctor in New Haven. At the first visit he spent an hour with me, taking the most extensive history I have ever had by a doctor. By the second visit, he had blood work results and a treatment plan. Within three weeks I felt that I had been given my life back. I was able to work full time again and most of my symptoms had abated. Curiously the blood work he ordered was nothing any MD couldn't have ordered, he just took the time to inquire and look deeper, and had the knowledge and training to then do something about it.

I was so impressed by naturopathic medicine, its principals and philosophy (see below) that I moved to Portland, Oregon to work for the oldest naturopathic college in existence in this country. (Oregon is a state that supports naturopathic doctors to be able to practice to the full extent of their education and training, including prescriptive authority, as do many other states including New Hampshire and Vermont.) In my time there, I was witness to remarkable outcomes of medical cases that conventional medicine was unable to help.

I now reside back in Connecticut, my home state, where unfortunately this state has an extremely outdated naturopathic law. I have believed for years that the people of Connecticut are "missing out" on the full benefits of what naturopathic doctors are trained to provide. Currently I attribute my good health to the auspices of naturopathic medicine. I have had Type I diabetes for 29 years and I do NOT have any signs or symptoms of ANY diabetic complications. But that has taken greater effort on my part because I have to use TWO general practice doctors to accomplish what I need, an ND, and a MD to prescribe, which takes two office visits, two co-pays, and twice the time and effort. Seems silly! We need modernization of an antiquated law!

I believe the citizens of Connecticut have the right to have access to the full scope of naturopathic medicine. It is extremely cost effective, safe, effective, and preventive primary care. Just to name a few areas where naturopathic medicine shines are chronic illnesses, allergies, digestive illnesses, colitis, diabetes, arthritis, even depression. If you or a loved one became ill or suffered from a chronic illness, I

believe you would be well served to have a naturopathic physician as part of your healthcare team. Please consider supporting this bill which would allow NDs to be able to treat their patients to a greater extent.

In case you are unfamiliar with what naturopathic medicine is to the full extent of practice:

Naturopathic medicine (sometimes called "naturopathy") is a distinct system of primary health care that emphasizes prevention and the self-healing process through the use of natural therapies.

The Healing Power of Nature (Vis Medicatrix Naturae): Naturopathic medicine recognizes an inherent self-healing process in people that is ordered and intelligent. Naturopathic physicians act to identify and remove obstacles to healing and recovery, and to facilitate and augment this inherent self-healing process.

Identify and Treat the Causes (Tolle Causam): The naturopathic physician seeks to identify and remove the underlying causes of illness rather than to merely eliminate or suppress symptoms.

First Do No Harm (Primum Non Nocere): Naturopathic physicians follow three guidelines to avoid harming the patient:

- Utilize methods and medicinal substances which minimize the risk of harmful side effects, using the least force necessary to diagnose and treat;
- Avoid when possible the harmful suppression of symptoms; and
- Acknowledge, respect, and work with individuals' self-healing process.

Doctor as Teacher (Docere): Naturopathic physicians educate their patients and encourage self-responsibility for health. They also recognize and employ the therapeutic potential of the doctor-patient relationship.

Treat the Whole Person: Naturopathic physicians treat each patient by taking into account individual physical, mental, emotional, genetic, environmental, social, and other factors. Since total health also includes spiritual health, naturopathic physicians encourage individuals to pursue their personal spiritual development.

Prevention: Naturopathic physicians emphasize the prevention of disease by assessing risk factors, heredity and susceptibility to disease, and by making appropriate interventions in partnership with their patients to prevent illness.

Naturopathic Practice

Naturopathic practice includes the following diagnostic and therapeutic modalities: clinical and laboratory diagnostic testing, nutritional medicine, botanical medicine, naturopathic physical medicine (including naturopathic manipulative therapy), public health measures, hygiene, counseling, minor office procedures, homeopathy, and prescription medication..

In conclusion, I sincerely thank you for your time and consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have regarding this.

In health,

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Thank you for your support and consideration.

Sincerely,
Robin Burke

